



YANNIS YOULOUNTAS 2019-11-14

SCENES FROM THE CIVIL WAR IN GREECE: A CALL TO WAKE UP!

DOCUMENTATION CIVIL WAR, GREECE

November 12: In the early morning, the refugee/migrant squat of Bouboulinas in Exarchia is besieged and evacuated, after the anti-terrorist OPKE had sealed off the north-east corner of the neighbourhood.

November 11: Anti-riot police encircle some 200 hundred students in the economics faculty of the University of Athens. Among the students, many are wounded after being violently hit by the police. The previous evening, police searches had found material for the making of molotov cocktails used in the resistance against the country's new authoritarian regime. Dozens are arrested.

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Monday, November 11, early morning. After a long, partly forced silence, here is our latest news from Greece, from Crete to Epirus (near Albania), to Athens, with an unprecedented wave of searches and arrests, false accusations against Rouvikonas, the end of the Golden Dawn trial and Exarchia becoming a powder keg.

Greece: A leaden repression falls upon the social movement!

Yannis Youlountas (11/11/2019)

At all times and in all places, whenever power has hardened, it has always extravagantly named those who resisted it. Under the Nazi occupation or the junta of the Colonels, opponents were sometimes referred to as "terrorists". Today, this word and others from the same barrel are thrown about all of the time against the rebels of an unjust and deadly society.

In Greece, this phenomenon is even more marked than at the other end of Europe. The semantic shift is total: rebel groups that have never killed nor wounded are singled out as the worst criminals. Among these groups, which only aims for material damage, the Rouvikonas group is about to be classified as a terrorist organization, something unprecedented in Europe.

Once again, Greece is a laboratory for the hardening of capitalism and the increasingly authoritarian nature of society on the old continent. This is why we want to warn our comrades from the other side of Europe of this shift: the criminalisation of the social movement can lead to the worst legal condemnations, to long prison terms and, ultimately, to a total censorship of our

revolutionary ideals.

This process is accompanied by ever greater means of surveillance and repression on the part of the State, which acts in the service of economic and political leaders. More and more of us are finding ourselves in the sights of a power that no longer accepts contradiction and that tracks all forms of resistance with an ever more methodical and sophisticated violence. What the social movement in France has experienced in recent months is happening all over the world right now, at the rate of uprisings that face a brutal and uninhibited repression. In this global puzzle of a capitalism with no where to turn, Greece, after a decade of exemplary struggles, becomes the laboratory of the trap that is set for us: it becomes progressively forbidden to dream, to propose a world rid of the political system that steals our lives, and to fight against it. Whoever dares to resist slowly becomes a deviant to be watched in all possible ways – with the support of new technologies – and sometimes to be deterred or neutralised even before s/he has lifted a finger.

Here is our alert, comrades and companions from the end of the world. Many of us are worried about this shift towards an ever more authoritarian society, in Exarchia but also elsewhere. We are witnessing a reversal of the meaning of words. In his 1984 novel, George Orwell wrote, "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength." Today, we can add: "Crime is daring to defend life".

Police everywhere, justice nowhere

Since the end of October, in the opinion of many, our communications are made difficult: HS internet servers, pickup computers, closed Facebook pages, blocked personal accounts, censorship of all kinds, phones lighting up alone and other delights of the technological era. There are countless testimonies and I, too, was forced to silence for a few days.

In addition, close surveillance becomes ubiquitous, visible and sometimes threatening: a comrade who with me provides night protection for the refugee squat Notara 26 had, four days ago, the tires of his car slashed with knives. Then, as she was taking pictures of the incident, the police officers came closer and said with a sneer:

-Next time, you'll pay attention!

The next day, another companion of struggle who lives east of the neighborhood saw a police officer brandishing his firearm in his direction when he had simply told him to "fuck off":

-I was tired of being followed, observed, asphyxiated in my private life. The intelligence services of the state leave me no more intimacy and do not hide anymore. There is obviously a desire to increase the pressure, to dissuade us, to have us worry.

Who is terrorizing whom?

More importantly, police officers on Exarchia's surveillance posts have repeatedly harassed women, mingling their actions with words. The tongues of the victims are beginning to loosen and we will have the opportunity to talk about it again. Some cops at the Kalidromiou street surveillance point often mention aloud a hypothetical "lack of hygiene of the Exarcheia girls" on the pretext that they are "too close" to the migrants; sexism and racism are one.

During the police patrols that pass by their windows, migrants huddled in the squats are also worried. They have heard several insulting injunctions reminiscent of those of the Nazis:

-Raus !!! In the shower !!! Soon the big cleaning !!!

The MAT (riot police) do not hide their opinions and sometimes carry their badges openly, among other signs of recognition.

In parallel with police pressure and violence, the power's media continue to announce the "imminent end of the cleaning Exarchia". They evoke the simultaneous evacuation of 4 squats around Exarchia square, including Notara 26 and perhaps the K * Vox, Rouvikonas' base. Some say that the government wants to finish before the demonstrations of November 17, the high point of the social movement, in memory of the insurrection against the dictatorship of the Colonels in 1973, around the Polytechnic School located west of Exarchia. An insistent rumor speaks of a "final assault" that would take place this week. It is hard to know if this is true, but a lot of elements are coming together.

Power is ready to strike hard

During the last weeks, power has been preparing for a long time. First of all by trying to "convince public opinion of the need to finish with it". A minister even said:

-We must without delay restore order to the center of Athens. There can not be a space without a State or a government, that is not acceptable. The law must be the same everywhere, starting with the respect for private property and the authority of the elected government (...) Squats are illegal. Self-management has limits. In a democracy, one cannot do just anything (sic).

The police apparatus is also ready for an even more important assault than the previous ones (there have already been 5 from August 26 to November 2). The DELTA mobile police, with their light motorcycles and their purely repressive role, are now operational. The announcement has just been made: they are officially on the ground today. However, their name has finally changed ... because of their sinister reputation! Instead of DELTA, they will be called DRASI (which means action). The initial D is

cleverly preserved. A little as if in France, we changed the name of "mobile police" [voltigeurs] into "mobile campers"

[vandrouilleurs]

. Change your name to try to forget the liabilities, a bit like political parties and big firms. Change your name so that nothing changes.

New equipment has also been delivered without all of the details being communicated. We are talking again about French equipment, especially for the intelligence services. Another important point, the changes to the penal code are currently going through to punish harder all forms of resistance. Paroxysm of this hardening of the law, the Rouvikonas group, which is considered by the government and the media as the main enemy – because of their almost daily actions against all of the instances of power – is on the verge of being classified as a "terrorist organisation". It is utterly insane if one compares the modes of action of this collective with what one defined until now as being terrorism, in Greece as elsewhere.

Rouvikonas never killed anyone? Never mind! Power is ready to invent anything so as to distill confusion, like the incredible story that has just unfolded over two days in Athens.

Rouvikonas member beaten and prosecuted for false accusations

On the night of Thursday to Friday, an anonymous rebel group went out to attack the bus of riot police parked to the east of the neighborhood, on Charilaou Trikoupi Street. This type of initiative is commonplace, very common even, especially since the neighborhood is, in part, under police occupation. But this time, the attack was, it is true, more powerful than usual and the MAT was caught in a deluge of fire, around ten o'clock at night. An anonymous action organised in response to the siege of Exarchia and the attacks perpetrated therein. That night, the Molotov cocktails injured three policemen, one in the head and one in the leg. A motorcycle from the DIAS brigade was burned. No doubt the goal was to kill.

But in the minutes that followed, the whole heart of Exarcheia was stormed by all the surrounding police forces. Dozens of MAT invaded the central square screaming and randomly struck at passers-by, men and women, young or old, when they had nothing to do with the attack. The scene lasted more than an hour. Among the residents of the neighborhood, about thirty took refuge inside the bistro named Kaféneio (one of the oldest of Exarcheia), but the police tried to break the door and threatened to arrest everyone before giving up a few minutes later. A famous TV reporter, who ran to the scene, was not recognised by the cops and was hit in turn, causing laughter among the observers of the scene. In their outburst of violence, the MAT were hitting their most loyal ally!

On the upper side of the square, on the side of the K * Vox, dozens of anarchists and other comrades began to regroup to protest against the police violence and defend places and people. In a thundering sound of grenades and a thick fog of tear gas, the police managed to catch a protester and drag him to the ground, while partially stripping him and striking him several times. According to several witnesses, he was then tortured in Bouboulinas Street, a few dozen meters away, under the furious yelling of police officers. The latter were even heard shouting: "*I hounda iné édo!*" (The junta is still here). This comrade is well known and does not hide himself from being an active member of Rouvikonas. He is a generous friend, supportive and experienced, hated by the police but very appreciated among us. And above all, this comrade had absolutely nothing to do with the attack that had just taken place east of the neighborhood, as many witnesses confirm.

If it's not you, it's your brother!

Yes, but the police wanted revenge. It struck at dozens of random people in the square (one kilometer away from the attack) and made 18 arrests. When the police saw the condition of our comrade, seriously injured, they proceeded as they often do: arresting him for resistance, and insulting and assaulting police officers. Completely ridiculous facts, of course! A pure invention, unfortunately common when the police beat someone. Another important fact: all the other people picked up were released without being charged. Only our comrade found himself before the examining magistrate, then the prosecutor, visibly wounded and with a splint and bruises.

Why? Quite simply, to be accused alone of all the charges concerning the nearby attack on the police bus. In other words, it was clearly necessary to avoid associating people outside Rouvikonas with this well-known member of the group, so as to establish the total responsibility of Rouvikonas in the operation against the police officers east of Exarcheia. An operation that clearly aimed to hurt if not kill, given the method used (an organised attack, a surprise rain of Molotov cocktails, a large group and fast). As you have understood, although he has nothing to do with the alleged facts and despite the numerous testimonies confirming to it, our comrade is used as an excuse to accuse the whole Rouvikonas group of attempted murder of police officers. The case is serious and falls dramatically in the midst of the penal code reform; at the very moment when the new Article 187A will allow the State to strike heavily against the well known Athenian anarchist group. The trial of our comrade will take place this November 20th.

Terrorist, Rouvikonas? In reality, the first of all terrorists is, of course, the power that steals our lives, manipulates us by playing on fear and manufactures, more than the entire conspiracysphere, tons of fake news that does not show its name (what we could call the "cretinosphere", so much are we taken for idiots). This is how it presents itself as a savior, a protector, a bulwark against the wicked anarchists and other revolutionaries who propose another way of organising ourselves, by taking our lives into our own

hands in real freedom, equality and fraternity; freedom to choose our lives, social and political equality, universal brotherhood beyond fears, labels and borders.

What is happening right now in Athens steadily confirms it. As everywhere else in the world, power trembles, it feels that anger rumbles, that revolt simmers, to the point of exploding in different parts of the globe. That's why it hardens further still and needs to fabricate scapegoats to distract.

Terrorism in all shapes and sizes

The day before yesterday morning, a vast anti-terrorist operation was launched throughout Attica, from Piraeus to Lavrio and from Megara to Exarchia. The results of a dozen searches were unveiled by the overexcited media of power: a total of 5 Kalashnikov rifles, a machine gun, dynamite, pistols, tear gas grenades, grenade launchers, detonators and explosives. This cleverly prepared catch is timely: the State has found an internal enemy and will be able to justify its new laws, as formerly the Patriot Act in the United States and the State of emergency in France. "For your safety, you will have less freedom." We know the song!

During the first hours after the discovery, the news agencies deliberately maintained confusion over the source of these weapons, without any specific information on the arrested persons. Was it again the fault of migrants? Rouvikonas? Of another group based in Exarchia? Nothing filtered out and the rumors spread, until the name of an obscure little group was evoked: "Organisation of revolutionary self-defense" which had essentially attacked the French embassy in 2016, then that of Mexico, in solidarity with the struggles in France and Chiapas.

As quickly, on all television channels, the new right-wing prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, had an orgasm:

-I would like to congratulate the Counter-Terrorism Service, the Greek Police and the Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen for their great success. To reaffirm, once again, my commitment to end permanently and irreversibly the problem of domestic terrorism in Greece.

Yesterday, searches and arrests continued, mixing everything up in the greatest confusion, on the pretext of the previous day's seizures. 500 meters north of Exarcheia, the premises of the School of Economics of Athens University were thoroughly searched. The same occurred at the home of many activists, including anarchists living on Strefi Hill, members of the Gare group, awakened by 30 masked policemen in the presence of their scared children, then to have their heads pushed into a salad bowl, after having been dragged down the stairs.

A leaden repression is currently falling upon Athens and everybody is threatened and tracked in a veritable funfair for policemen in need of leftists and anarchists. A firework display for the valets of power and the Ferris wheel for the new Prime Minister, a poor heir of the Mitsotakis political dynasty, even more narcissistic than the vile monarch of Prévert in his work *Le roi et l'oiseau*. Behind more and more groups and individuals, in all forms and fashions, it is the whole social movement that is targeted. The ultimate goal is twofold: on the one hand, to intimidate us, to dissuade us and, on the other hand, to spread fear among the population and to make all those who resist the enemies of peace and concord. One has been told the same in France: the State guarantees freedom, equality and fraternity. It is even written everywhere. So what more can be asked for?

Good migrants and bad migrants

Even as the sinister camp of Moria in Lesbos has just exceeded the threshold of 15 000 detainees (yes, detainees, because these people are blocked, desperate and sometimes in a very bad state of health, in a camp created by the European Union and initially planned for 2600 refugees), the Greek government boasts of having successfully completed its operation "Golden Visas". In recent years, Greece has granted visas to all non-EU nationals who come to invest at least 250,000 euros in real estate on its territory, something that mainly allows Chinese businessmen to settle and to walk quietly through Europe, while the Afghan or Eritrean refugees suffer martyrdom in the camps and the hateful labyrinth of asylum services. 5300 gold visas have been given since 2013, including 3400 to rich Chinese and also several hundred to Russian businessmen. Fraternity is beautiful, is it not?

In addition to this cynical and sordid inequality of treatment, the Greek minister of police said he was worried about the likely arrival of dangerous jihadists among the new boats of migrants arriving on the shores of the Aegean Sea. Once again, power uses the word terrorist to distract, sow fear, stigmatise and mistreat people who most often have nothing to do with what is being blamed of them. Since the dawn of time, power divides to better rule, then arises as arbitrator and protector. Power sows discord by pretending to ensure concord. It lies as it breathes, gathers the crowds with streams of words devoid of meaning, builds houses of cards and bases all of its power on paper: bank notes, title deeds, public and private debt, ballots, texts of law, constitution ... Paper, nothing but paper, in a society which has lost touch with the ground, trapped in its own spectacle and cut off from the reality of a dying world.

Everywhere, the wind is rising

Two weeks ago, I was still in Crete where the struggle against the new Kastelli airport begins to take another turn. As the first olive trees were torn down, the question arises more and more about the possible forms of the struggle. How to resist ? This is the question that circulates here and there in Crete, as elsewhere. The hypotheses are whispered. We are suspicious. We are considering many things without knowing what tomorrow will be like.

Same thing a week ago, in Athens, where I was taking part in a symposium organised by Rouvikonas and the new Anarchist Federation of Greece (*Anarxiki Omospodia*, composed of different approaches and currents), for two days in the completely full Embros self-managed Embros theater. It had been years since I had heard so many relevant, lucid, and prolific interventions in terms of proposals. Something is happening, obviously. Something deep, clear and intelligent. Something that looks like an awareness, criticism and politics. I emerged from these two days as awakened, revived, enlightened, not by any avant-garde, but by the fertile diversity of our debates, in a great mutual listening and on an equal plane. For my part, I had been asked to intervene on relations, communications and international solidarity. I did not fail to convey your support and to summarise the many actions carried out in more than 60 countries of the world in support of Exarcheia and Rouvikonas. I also told the recurring anecdote about the letter P in the black star. Indeed, I am often asked in the west of Europe why there is a P in the Rouvikonas logo. Besides, it made the hall laugh in Athens. In the Greek alphabet, the P is simply the letter "rho", that is to say the equivalent of R. It is thus the initial of Rouvikonas, but in Greek alphabet!

The twilight of gargoyles

Meanwhile, the trial of the Golden Dawn has finally come to an end, six years after the assassinations of Shahzad Luqman and Pavlos Fyssas, in a chorus of Nazi whining. After the parade of the main members of the organisation (becoming, by turn, weathercocks at the bar of the court, to the point that one of the frightened fascists even fainted), the supreme chief of the supermen with blood reddened daggers spoke last, Friday, as a final bouquet of a succession of lies and denials. The prosecutor's findings will be released in January and the verdict in the spring. This trial was so long and tedious that it gave the party time to disappear completely from parliament and fall to almost negative scores, under the assault of the anti-fascist movement throughout Greece. Golden Dawn was approaching the 10% mark in 2014 (9.4% for the European elections). It fell to less than 3% in July and now to less than 0.5% in the polls! The carriage became a pumpkin again and the princes of the night turned into grimacing gargoyles, abandoning almost all of their premises in Greece, including the largest on Mesoghion Street in Athens. For weeks, the deputy chiefs and opportunists of all kinds resign one after the other.

The king is naked. The Fuhrer even begs his judges: "I did not know!" (for their attacks and the assassinations) like a vulgar boos of the camps of yesteryear. Golden Dawn is no more, but fascism is, including in the government and in the wheels of the State, more harmful and virulent than ever. A fascism that once again tries to divert our legitimate struggles against misery towards identity concerns of another age, mythifying the past, finding scapegoats among the most vulnerable and thus sparing capitalism and the authoritarian organisation of society. Let's not be naïve, the attacks and ambushes will continue – like the one I suffered in Piraeus last June and that only intensified my will to fight. Golden Dawn was just a label on a poison, one of the many names of a universal scourge, a transient facet of a problem that remains inseparable from the authoritarian and capitalist society that generates it. The label has fallen, but the problem remains whole.

That is why those who claim to fight against fascism without fighting against its causes make fun of us. Capitalism, power and the media of power are an integral part of the problem and are inseparable from the monster they generate. The collaborators of this political, economic and media system are not allies but impostors, especially when they practice selective racism on the pretext of attributes sometimes borne by the most miserable among us.

While awaiting the verdict of the Golden Dawn trial in Greece, I will soon be aware, at another scale, of my verdict in France. In October 2017, Golden Dawn's little European brothers, leaders of the Identity Generation in France, Italy and Germany, sued me for participating in the sabotage of their Defend Europe operation in the Mediterranean, as they tried to block the rescue of migrants at sea by NGO ships. I won the first judgement in Nice, then lost on appeal in Aix-en-Provence, and I am now waiting for the hearing in the supreme court of criminal justice, that will take place on November 26 in Paris. I will probably know at the beginning of December the outcome of this legal battle led by my lawyers Dominique Tricaud, Matteo Bonaglia and Claire Waquet. Another accused by my side, my friend Jean-Jacques Rue, is impatient to know what the Court will decide. This decision will be highly symbolic given the circumstances. I will keep you informed of the verdict as soon as I get to know it. I sincerely thank ProActiva Open Arms for daring to testify at this trial to describe the actions of the fascist sailors, as well as Pia Klemp, my sea captain friend and one of the Luventa 10, and Sea Watch, who also helped us a lot in Exarchia.

The righteous of today

In contrast to this selfish, cretinous and dangerous hate, many solidarity workers help refugees and migrants, sometimes in very difficult conditions, for example after helping them to return from the sinister camps designed by the European Union, after police raids in squats. This is particularly the case of an Athenian teacher who reminds us of the righteous of old, taking risks with his hierarchy and, sometimes, the police, and mixing his desire for a less authoritarian pedagogy with concrete acts of struggle and mutual aid. This formidable teacher practices Freinet Pedagogy on a daily basis, inviting cooperation rather than competition, and also working outside, in the homes of some children and their parents who are terrified by the experience of the camps. This beautiful story can serve as an example that will also be in our next film (!).

I have also recently been to Epirus, in the north-west of Greece, near the Albanian border, in the middle of picturesque mountains and camouflaged caves that bear witness to the time of resistance. It is in this wild land that the Greek state now allows multinationals to undertake oil and shale gas research. I will show you this struggle, among others, in our next film "We are not

afraid of ruins". From north to south, the resistance converges more and more between class, social and environmental struggles, with the same obviousness: everything is political and requires the profound questioning of a system that is completely out of date, poisoned, sold to economic power. We are more and more numerous to understand that we will not change the world without transforming it at the root, in its most taboo creed, that is to say, at the cornerstone of power.

We do not have time to be afraid anymore

To leave behind political prehistory becomes a vital necessity. To organise ourselves differently, not only to take our lives in hand, but to save life as long as there is still time. To pass from power as a name describing those who dominate us or who claim to govern us, to the verb power, which means to be able to choose, each one and together, our lives. Only by getting rid of power as a name will we liberate power as a verb. These homonyms are also antonyms. To be able to live free, let us free ourselves from power.

From one end of the planet to the other, against the backdrop of singular and sometimes seemingly innocuous demands, from Chile to Indonesia and from Guinea to Lebanon, there is a deep desire for change that rises until to Europe. A desire for questioning and reinvention. A desire to end the old-fashioned politics and its procession of lies and corruption. A desire not to let others have the power to decide our lives, to crush us, to humiliate us and sometimes to kill us.

Friday night, at the end of the debate that followed the projection of *Love and Revolution* in Ioannina, a young woman said:

-We have no time to hesitate. We do not have time to be afraid anymore. We have no other choice. We must alert ourselves and alert everyone around us: things can not last, the planet can not go on, all that lives can not go on, humanity is running straight into a wall ... We must wrest power from those who claim to rule us. We must tear away the common good from those who stole it and sack it. We have no other choice: to live free or to die.

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(1) If you want to know more and help us produce our fourth film, We are not afraid of ruins (conceived and distributed like the preceding ones), it is here: <http://lamouretlarevolution.net/spip.php?rubrique15>

(Having given so far priority to solidarity towards Exarcheia and, more recently, towards a social kitchen, we are still only at 20% of the appeal to help us finance the film. Thank you for your support, a new item will be published soon)

taken from here

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